

## Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission (LAWC) Assessment Report for Animal Shelter Facilities in Louisiana



Date **November 2, 2011**

Inspectors: **Dr. Gary A. Balsamo, State Public Health Veterinarian; Aristide Marshall, Registered Sanitarian;**

Name of Facility **City of Walker Animal Shelter**

---

There are several state laws that set minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities, and quarantine facilities. They include...

- Louisiana minimum legal requirements for animal shelters, impoundment facilities and quarantine facilities, Title 3, Chapter 17, Louisiana Revised Statutes 2431 et seq.
  - This statute addresses requirements for veterinary treatment of animals, limitations on fees, authority of parish governments to adopt, general shelter standards, shelter construction, shelter operating procedures, sterilization requirements, adoption standards, and branding.
- Continuing education requirements for certified animal euthanasia technicians, Louisiana Revised Statutes , Title 37, Chapter 18B, Louisiana Revised Statutes 1551 et seq.
- The control of rabies and other zoonotic diseases, Louisiana Administrative Code, Chapter 51, Part III
- American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia ([http://www.avma.org/issues/animal\\_welfare/euthanasia.pdf](http://www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf))

You should familiarize yourself with these laws and any requirements that may pertain to your facility or its employees.

Many features and practices that enhance facility operations for the animals or the facility staff are not addressed in the above statutes. LAWC considers the recommendations of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Control Association, the

Humane Society of the United States, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians in shelter evaluations. Resources are listed below:

- National Animal Control Association Guidelines  
(<http://www.nacanet.org/guidelines.html>)
- Humane Society of the United States Guidelines for the Operation of an Animal Shelter  
([http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource\\_library/policies\\_and\\_guidelines/guidelines\\_for\\_animal\\_shelter\\_operations.html](http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/policies_and_guidelines/guidelines_for_animal_shelter_operations.html))
- Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, Association of Shelter Veterinarians  
([http://www.sheltervet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks\\_with%20security.pdf](http://www.sheltervet.org/associations/4853/files/Standards%20final%20bookmarks_with%20security.pdf))

The list of questions below should be retained and utilized for self evaluations on a routine basis. This list contains features and practices that strengthen facility operations. Some are required by law (these are labeled as "**MANDATED**") and are reiterated in this supplement as a reinforcement of their requirement.

**LAWC Comments and suggestions are added under each item in the assessment.**

#### A. Animal Euthanasia

1. ☒Y ☐N Have staff who perform euthanasia successfully completed a **MANDATED** Louisiana Board of Veterinary Medicine-approved euthanasia training course within 120 days of initial employment and earned the required 6 hours of continuing education credits annually?
2. ☐Y ☒N Is a written protocol available for the euthanasia of ill or injured animals in the field or before the end of the impoundment period?  
*Euthanasias are not performed in the field. As stated below, there is no written policy of any type for euthanasia.*
3. ☐Y ☒N Is a written protocol available for routine euthanasia?  
*LAWC recognizes the importance of written policies for procedures at public animal shelters. The staff of the City of Walker Animal Shelter does not, at present, have written policies governing euthanasia. LAWC recommends that management finalize and publish written policies for storage of food and supplies, shelter hygiene, employee training, isolation of animals, euthanasia, feeding, and shelter oversight. These protocols will assist in training employees and should reduce the chance for inadvertent errors. LAWC recommends a two-tiered approval process for euthanasia, where the primary decision maker garners additional approval from a supervisor or equally ranked co-worker.*

Questions 4-10 are for facilities using injectable euthanasia:

4. ☐Y ☒N If a written protocol is available, does the protocol require two or more people to be present to perform injectable euthanasia techniques?



*There is no written protocol, but the option of euthanasia is decided upon jointly by the animal control officer and the shelter director.*

5. ☒Y ☐N Are the injectable euthanasia standards **MANDATED** in the latest report of the American Veterinary Medical Association on Euthanasia, being met?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is there a sturdy, sanitizable table in the euthanasia room?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the lighting sufficient to allow easy visualization of the injection site?
8. ☐Y ☐N Are the controlled drugs stored in a securely locked cabinet?  
*NA. All controlled drugs are maintained and stored at the LSU Veterinary School by staff and students of the LSU Shelter Improvement Program.*
9. ☐Y ☐N If controlled drugs are used in the field, are they securely locked in the animal control vehicle?  
*NA. Controlled drugs are not kept in vehicles.*
10. ☐Y ☐N Are euthanasia drug logs used, kept current, and available for inspection?  
*NA*

*Question 11 is for facilities using carbon monoxide euthanasia:*

11. ☒Y ☐N Does the carbon monoxide chamber meet standards for safe operation and is the machine in good working order?  
*Present plans at the facility are to phase out use of the carbon monoxide chamber by the beginning of 2012. LAWC recommends that the shelter cease using the gas chamber as soon as possible. This action will permit the shelter to be in compliance with the law that will go into effect in January 2013, and with the 2011 legislative resolution asking all shelters to stop using gas chambers as soon as possible. Inspectors were told that the "detector" malfunctions frequently, which lends even more support to suggesting cessation of use.*

#### **B. Management:**

1. ☒Y ☐N Has the facility manager successfully completed a Louisiana Animal Control Association-approved Animal Control Officer Basic Training course?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is an office available at the facility, or elsewhere, for facility staff and/or animal control officers?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility attended by a veterinarian or is there a relationship established with one or more local veterinarians to provide advice, assistance, or treatment to animals?  
*Dr. Wendy Wolfson and the LSU Shelter Improvement Program, Dr. John Varnado perform veterinary work for the facility.*
4. ☐Y ☒N Does this facility employ a full-time veterinarian?
5. ☐Y ☐N Are formal **MANDATED** semi-annual inspections conducted by an authorized parish official to ensure compliance with state statutes?  
*LAWC recommends implementation of a semi-annual inspection program by a city official or operational unit in city government. The inspection's purpose would be to routinely monitor the management, practices and conditions of the*

*shelter and to assess needs for improvement. In essence, the commission recommends "self regulation" by the government agency under which jurisdiction of the animal shelter lies.*

6. ☐Y ☒N Are standard operation procedures (SOP) written for the facility's operation, including housing, cleaning, animal care, and facility maintenance?  
*See above recommendations for written protocols.*
7. ☒Y ☐N Are animals separated by their behavior and age in addition to their state of health, species, sex, and size (separation by health, age (puppies and kittens separated from adults) species, sex (unneutered males separated from females) is **MANDATED** by law)?
8. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a sterilization program for its adopted animals (this is **MANDATED** for animal control facilities under La. R.S. 2472)?  
*All animals, with the exception of reclamations by owner, leaving the facility are spayed or neutered prior to release.*
9. ☐Y ☒N Have staff been immunized against rabies?  
*The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that animal control personnel receive pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis. The vaccine regimen is comparatively expensive and many shelters only administer vaccinations to workers who have been employed for some specified duration (usually 6 months to one year). The City of Walker Animal Shelter should pursue a goal of administering pre-exposure prophylaxis to animal contact shelter employees who complete a probationary tenure of work.*
10. ☐Y ☒N Do animal contact staff work with terrestrial wildlife or bats?
11. ☐Y ☒N Are staff rabies vaccinations evidenced by adequate titers (This is only recommended if bats are handled routinely. This is also recommended if terrestrial wildlife are handled routinely in skunk variant rabies endemic areas of the state)?
12. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of pit bulls?  
*However, the shelter does release pit bulls to rescue groups.*
13. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter restrict or ban adoptions of any other breed or type animal?
14. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter sell or donate live animals for education or research?
15. ☐Y ☒N Was this shelter a plaintiff or defendant in any civil or criminal court case in the past year?
16. ☐Y ☒N Are shelter standards included in city or parish ordinances?  
*Although the City of Walker Animal Shelter abides by city and parish ordinances in issues related to licensing, impoundment, dangerous or vicious dogs, spaying and neutering, exhibitions and displays, and rabies control, shelter standards, such as those specified in the Louisiana Revised Statutes, are not included in the ordinances. Local government officials are strongly urged to include shelter standards in local ordinances.*
17. ☐Y ☒N Are hours and emergency telephone prominently displayed on building exterior as **MANDATED** by La. R.S. 2463?



*Although signs throughout the building interior are both attractive and effective, there is no large, prominent sign on the exterior of the building indicating hours of operation and emergency after hours telephone numbers. This information should be displayed prominently on the exterior of the building.*

18. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have a receiving area for the public to bring in or adopt animals?

19. ☒Y ☐N Does the shelter have an area for the public to acquaint themselves with adoptable animals?

### C. Records:

1. ☒Y ☐N Are records computerized?

2. ☒Y ☐N Do the animal records include accurate descriptions of the animals? Suggested information includes: impounding officer's name, date and time of capture, location of capture, tag and/or collar identification, breed, sex, age, size (height and weight), coat color and pattern, ear and tail types, description of markings and unusual findings (scars, tattoos, microchips), and the condition of the animal.

3. ☐Y ☒N Do the animals' records document daily observation?  
*A record documenting daily observation of each animal is also recommended. This ensures that none of the resident animals are overlooked. This type of record often consists of a checklist, or a list requiring daily data input, such as proportion of food consumed, body weight etc.*

4. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals scanned for microchips and/or identification tattoos?  
*All incoming animals are checked for tattoos and are scanned on intake. All animals are also scanned prior to euthanasia.*

### D. General Structure:

1. ☐Y ☒N Is a secured area used to safely unload and load animals to prevent their escape?  
*The area is sufficiently secure for offloading canines, however felines may escape, since this is not an enclosed or screened area. Care must be exercised when offloading cats. Cats should only be offloaded in secure animal carriers or cages.*

2. ☒Y ☐N Is the facility built in such a way that it prevents access by unauthorized persons?

3. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing vehicles available?

4. ☒Y ☐N Is a secure area for storing outdoor equipment available?

5. ☐Y ☒N Are drains covered with grates to prevent animals from stepping into them?  
*Where possible, drains should be covered with grates to prevent injury to workers, the public and animals.*

6. ☒Y ☒N Are drains covered with grates to prevent people from stepping into them?  
*See above!*
7. ☒Y ☐N Are there problems apparent with drainage or moisture at this facility?  
*Chronic problems with wet floors exists in the kennel area. This problem is both a safety problem and a problem that may interfere with successful disinfection of the premises.*

**E. Water and Electric Power:**

1. ☒Y ☐N Are an adequate number of water faucets available?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are the water hoses strong and in good repair?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are adequate hose bibs and hoses available?
4. ☒Y ☐N Are hoses kept off the floor when not in use?
5. ☒Y ☐N Is hot water available?
6. ☒Y ☐N Is a backup generator available to provide electricity during power outages?  
*There are no generators available onsite, however the city maintains a generator on a trailer that is available for use during emergencies.*
7. ☒Y ☐N In the animal areas, are the electrical outlets mounted at least 3-4 feet above the floor?
8. ☒Y ☐N In the animal areas, do the electrical outlets have protective coverings?
9. ☒Y ☐N Are the electrical outlets, in areas of water use, Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected?
10. ☒Y ☐N Are there adequate sinks to wash food and water bowls and other equipment?
11. ☒Y ☐N If a bathtub or large sink is used to bathe animals or wash equipment, is there adequate toe space under it to allow staff to work comfortably?
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a restroom for staff use?  
*There are two restrooms for staff use.*

**F. Waste Disposal:**

1. ☒Y ☐N Is there a holding area for carcasses awaiting final disposal?
2. ☒Y ☐N Is there a freezer or refrigerator to store animal carcasses until final disposal?
3. ☒Y ☐N Do the dog pen floors slope ¼-½ inch per foot toward drains and gutters?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is animal waste washed into a sewer or septic system?
5. ☒Y ☐N Does this shelter employ special practices for handling medical or potentially infectious waste?  
*Appropriate and safe sharps disposal is practiced.*

**G. Storage:**

1. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available for facility supplies?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are cleaning chemicals stored in a separate area, room, or cabinet?
3. ☒Y ☐N Is adequate space available to store the current quantity of animal food?
4. ☒Y ☐N Is the food storage area clean and free of spilled food?
5. ☒Y ☐N Is there a procedure to use older food first?
6. ☐Y ☒N Are storage shelves and racks at least 12 inches off the floor and at least 4 inches from walls to permit adequate air circulation around food products?  
*Inspectors informed the shelter of proper storage techniques.*
7. ☒Y ☐N Are food storage containers adequately sealed against infestation by insects or other vermin?

**H. Primary Enclosures:**

1. ☒Y ☐N Is one dog housed per pen?
2. ☒Y ☐N Do cat cages offer a minimum of 4 square feet per cat?
3. ☐Y ☒N Are the dog pen side walls solid to at least 4 –5 feet in height between animals?  
*In most cases the dog pen walls are not solid. This may facilitate interaction between neighboring animals and also may facilitate transmission of disease.*
4. ☐Y ☒N Do the pens have tops on them?  
*Not all have tops.*
5. ☐Y ☐N If the pens have tops, do the tops offer at least a 7-foot clearance?  
*NA*
6. ☒Y ☐N Does the chain-link fencing of the dog pens appear to be at least 9-gauge wire (heavier than typical fences)?
7. ☒Y ☐N Is the dog-pen fencing securely attached to the frames and gates?
8. ☐Y ☒N Do the dog pens offer indoor and outdoor access?
9. ☐Y ☒N Are guillotine doors present between the indoor and outdoor runs?
10. ☐Y ☐N If guillotine doors are present, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?  
*NA*
11. ☒Y ☐N Do the gates on the cages and pens latch securely?
12. ☒Y ☐N Is there a way to prevent the general public from entering the animal containment area without the knowledge of facility staff?
13. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures constructed of materials that are easily sanitized?



14. ☒Y ☐N Are primary enclosures well maintained and in good repair?

**I. Feeding/ Watering:**

1. ☐Y ☒N Is a work table that can be easily sanitized available in the food preparation area?
2. ☒Y ☐N Are water bowls secured in the cages to prevent tipping?
3. ☒Y ☐N Are food and water bowls washed and sanitized daily?
4. ☐Y ☒N Are shelves or racks present to store food and water containers that are drying?  
*No drying racks are utilized.*

**J. Pest Control:**

1. ☐Y ☒N Is the premise maintained so that the potential for rodents and insect pests are kept to a minimum?  
*Although evidence of rodent problems exist, the shelter does contract with a private pest control company for both insect and rodent control. Vegetation along the side of the building could constitute rodent harborage and should be removed and the area kept free of weeds.*
2. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility have a program to remove external parasites from animals as they enter the facility?  
*All animals are shampooed with flea shampoo upon entrance into the facility. Advantage is used on all animals after admittance into the adoption program.*
3. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, does the product's label include the target species?
4. ☒Y ☐N If a program exists, are personal protective equipment and training offered to staff who use parasiticides?

**K. Rabies Quarantine**

1. ☒Y ☐N Does the facility quarantine animals for rabies observation? *If "no," skip the remainder of this section.*
2. ☒Y ☐N Is it easy to distinguish which animals are quarantined for rabies observation and which animals are housed in quarantine pens due to "overflow"?  
*The animals are confined in a separate area of the facility.*
3. ☒Y ☐N Is public access prohibited from the quarantine area by a secure door or gate?  
*The area is fenced and gated with a droplatch device securing the area. The rabies observation area is identified by a permanent sign. Each cage is padlocked and a "MAY BITE" sign is displayed on each cage. If a rabies observation case is present in any other area, temporary signs are used. Similar signage is employed.*
4. ☐Y ☐N If a secure door or gate is not available, is there a barrier to exclude the public from the quarantine area?  
*NA*



5. ☐Y ☒N Are there guillotine doors to confine rabies-suspect dogs in one part of the pen during cleaning or inclement weather?
6. ☐Y ☐N If guillotine doors are available, can these doors be operated by staff outside the pen?  
NA
7. ☐Y ☒N Should testing of animal brains be required, would this shelter submit the sample to the OPH laboratory for analysis?
8. ☐Y ☒N Does this shelter participate in the OPH rabies testing and surveillance program?

**L. Disease: regarding the following diseases, please rate the severity of the problem in animals taken into the facility. Your answers should reflect the gravity of the problem in incoming animals, not persistent problems at the facility.**

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem | Intestinal parasites             |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Scabies (mange)                  |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Ringworm (dermatophytes)         |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Parvovirus                       |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Canine distemper                 |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Canine cough                     |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Feline upper respiratory disease |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Feline diarrhea                  |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor <input type="checkbox"/> No problem            | Canine heartworm disease         |
| 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Major <input type="checkbox"/> Minor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No problem           | Feline leukemia                  |

**M. Infection Control**

1. ☐Y ☒N Are all animals isolated on intake to this facility and screened in a separate area for disease and temperament before being placed in the general population?  
*There is no isolation on intake. There is no testing for temperament. Should funds or space become available, creation of an isolation area is warranted. Isolation of intake animals is conducive to maintaining a healthy population of adoptable animals. Temperament testing is also desirable to prevent problems with the adoption of aggressive animals. Identification and removal of aggressive animals is desirable for public safety.*
2. ☐Y ☐N Are all animals vaccinated (Dogs: distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus, leptospirosis, bordetella. Cats: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, chlamydia, panleukopenia, feline leukemia) upon intake to the facility?
3. ☐Y ☐N Are all animals vaccinated after being determined to be adoptable?  
NA
4. ☐Y ☒N Are incoming animals checked for heartworms?
  - a. ☒Y ☐N (only adoptable are checked for heartworms)  
*Checked by LSU if still available at time of LSU Shelter Improvement Program visit.*

5. ☒Y ☐N Are incoming animals dewormed for intestinal parasites?
- a. ☐Y ☐N (only adoptable are dewormed for intestinal parasites)  
NA
6. ☒Y ☒N Are rabies vaccines administered at this facility?  
*Yes: Rabies vaccines are given by the LSU Shelter Improvement Program veterinarian, when present.*  
*No: Otherwise rabies vaccines are not administered.*
7. ☒Y ☐N Are rabies vaccines required after pets are adopted out of the facility?  
*Yes. If not vaccinated by the LSU Shelter Improvement Program, all adoptors, rescuers and recoverers are issued vouchers for rabies vaccines, and rabies vaccines are required.*

#### N. Population Control

1. ☒Y ☐N Are all animals determined to be adoptable spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
2. ☐Y ☒N Are only some animals spayed or neutered prior to adoption?
3. ☐Y ☐N Are intact animals that are adopted required to be spayed or neutered after adoption?  
NA

#### Additional comments:

LAWC would like to compliment the Walker Animal Shelter adoption program. The adoption rate for dogs at the shelter is approximately 65%. Local businesses and other private sponsors contribute funds that finance the program, so adoption is free to the public.

Several public events are held throughout the area promoting adoption, such as the annual *Adoption Day at the Park*.

LAWC makes the following suggestions for improvements:

- Animal waste was observed in the exercise area that appeared to be present for over 24 hours. Staff should strive to remove all waste at a minimum frequency of once per day. Allowing waste to accumulate may lead to persistent problems with parasites, due to incubation periods of certain helminthes and protozoa.



- Although a separate room for euthanasia exists, the floors in the facility are constructed of unfinished, porous wood, which does not promote the most sanitary conditions. The floors should be covered with non-porous flooring, if funds are made available. The importance of rendering the euthanasia room easily sanitized is magnified by the fact that the room doubles as a surgical recovery room. The room, of course, is never used for recovery when euthanasia procedures are carried out.
- Food and water bowl slots in many of the cages are damaged, some to the point of being a potential source of injury to resident animals. LAWC suggests that the fencing be repaired as soon as possible.

**RATING:**

- ☐ Generally exceeds standards
- ☒ Meets standards
- ☐ Needs significant improvements to meet standard

Brian Melius, DVM : Brian Melius Date: 4-24-12  
Chairman, Shelter Inspection Subcommittee  
LAWC